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ELLA GOODWIN'S TRIAL.

BY S. ANNIE FROST.

"Going out again?"

Ella Goodwin spoke in a fretful tone,

and her pretty face was puckered up into

a most dismal frown.

"I promised Charley I would step round

for an hour or two and have a game of

dominos."

"Anything to get away from home!"

But Will Goodwin was already out of

hearing. His wife after a fretful remark

addressed the walls, to the effect

that she was a fool for ever getting mar-

ried, took a novel from under the sofa

cushion and was soon reading with an

air of absorbed interest. Baby woke and

made the fact shrilly known. An impatient

toss threw the book down again, and

baby was soothed to sleep with a gen-

tleness, strangely at variance with the

jerk that had put the book on the ta-

ble.

When she slept once more in the cradle

Ella yawned and again took up her book.

But before she had opened there came a

tap at the door, and an elderly lady with

a sweet, fair face came in.

"Alone," she said, as Ella eagerly wel-

comed her and took off her wraps.

"I am always alone! Will gets his

meals here!" was the bitter reply. "He

goes to the store as soon as he swallows

his breakfast, and he is always out in the

evening. Now he is with his brother play-

ing dominoes."

"Don't you play dominoes?"

"Yes."

"I'd keep him at home to play."

"He would not care to stay. I suppose

all young married men tire of home, Aunt

Mary?"

"Not all! But you speak in a bitter

tone that pains me, Ella. It is not like

you, but I and I never complained before,

but I am tired of being alone all the time.

Baby fills the day, but novels don't fill

the evening."

"Ella, since you have spoken to me,

will you let me give you a word of ad-

vice?"

"You know my way."

"Look in the mirror, dear, then look

round the room!" Ella obeyed. In the

mirror she saw a faded, wrinkled, and

precisely clean; a face pretty and ex-

pressive, with a wreath of golden hair

loosely knotted into a comb and decid-

edly sitting. The room, a hand-

somely furnished sitting room, was beg-

ging for a broom as eloquently as a

dirty carpet could beg. Harry's cradle in

one corner balanced a disordered work-

table in another. The centre table was

piled with miscellaneous articles, among

st which a bowl of bread and milk and

a fire shovel figured conspicu-

ously.

A crimson flush rose on the young wife's

cheek.

"What's the use of having things nice

when nobody sees them but me, or dress-

ing when Will is never at home."

"He might be at home more if things

were nice and you were dressed."

There was silence for a few moments.

Then Ella spoke:

"I'll try it, aunty. I suppose it is part

ly my fault. Before Harry was born he

was at home more, but I have been care-

less since then."

"You are not strong, I know," Aunt

Mary said very kindly, "and baby is a

care, but I would try to be dressed in the

evening and have the room cheerful. Your

piano looks as if it was never open-

ed."

"I never is!"

"Don't you have time to practice?"

"I can't plead want of time, aunty. I

am one of the best of servants, and time

hangs upon my hands. I am glad you

came in. I believe I want a moral

shaking."

Then they talked of other matters, of

Harry's first tooth and baby accomplish-

ments, of the winter fashions, of feminine

interests of all kinds. The innate sweet-

ness of Ella's temper made her take her

aunt's gentle reproof in the spirit of love

that dictated it, and when the parting

caress was given, she whispered:

"I'll try, aunty, to make home more

attractive for Will."

She was fast asleep with Harry nestled

in her arms when Will came home, but the

touch of his lips upon her cheek aroused

her.

"Did you have a pleasant evening," she

asked. "Aunt Mary was here and left

her love for you."

"Charley and I played awhile, and then

Mira Oreighton dropped in and sang for

us."

"She seems to drop in pretty often."

"She is so intimate with the girls."

"I never thought her singing very won-

derful."

"You sing far better. But when I can't

get any better, I like hers."

It was not the first time Will had told

the same story, and strong in her new

resolutions, Ella determined upon a good

hour of practice, early in the morning.

Jane was rather amazed at the clear-

ing the sitting room received at the hands

of herself and her mistress. The cradle

was banished into an adjoining bedroom

where baby could still be heard if he

wakened; the fire shovel assumed its legiti-

mate place at the hearth. It rather

astonished Ella herself to find how many

useless articles were "about," and how

universally everything was in the wrong

place. By noon the room was bright

as hands could make it, and after

luncheon a man was sent for to tune the

piano, closed for nearly a year.

The six o'clock dinner brought Will.

Ella was in the hall as he entered, and led

the way to the dining room, where a

cheery brightness reigned.

"Company, Nell?" queried Will, his

eyes resting upon his wife. The golden

hair, carefully curled, was gathered into

a mass with a comb, and all in a profusion

of natural ringlets up Ella's shoulders,

the waving bands drawn back from her

face. Her dress, of soft blue merino, was

finished with dainty ruffles at throat and

wrists, and Will's last Christmas gift, a

set of cameo, held collar, cuffs, and

dropped from the delicate ears. Not a